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STION OF PALESTINE
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
NVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
FFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
ALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS
F THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 12 March 1998 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General

I wish to inform you of the current dangerous developments regarding the eriorating situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, luding Jerusalem. On 10 March 1998, Israeli soldiers shot and killed three estinian men and wounded four others at an army checkpoint in the West Bank ween the Palestinian villages of Tarkoumiah and Idnah, approximately 8 miles t of the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron). The men were Palestinian labourers from village of Dura, who were killed as they rode in a van returning to their es after a day of work in Israel. The Israeli troops indiscriminately opened e upon the van without any provocation.

Following this tragedy, clashes erupted in the West Bank between Israeli diers and Palestinian civilians mourning and protesting the killings. On March 1998, Israeli troops fired rubber-coated metal bullets at the testers, wounding approximately 34 Palestinians in and around Al-Khalil and roximately 10 other civilians in and around the city of Ramallah. Today, tinuing clashes resulted in the wounding of another 27 Palestinian testers. Further, in two separate incidents near Ramallah and Al-Khalil, two estinian youths were shot and wounded by Israeli settlers.

This is a time characterized by the continuing deadlock in the Israeli-estinian peace process owing to continuous Israeli violations and

non-compliance with the agreements reached between the two sides. Moreover, it is a time of increasing despair among the Palestinian people owing to the serious deterioration of the living conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as a result of the illegal policies and practices of Israel, in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Such recent actions by Israel, the occupying Power, only further fuel the tensions in the area and the overwhelming frustration and despair of the Palestinian people.

Clearly, while the Israeli side continuously vocalizes its alleged need for security as the reason for its refusal to proceed with the implementation of overdue provisions in the agreements reached, the security of the Palestinian people continues to remain an arbitrary consideration at constant risk at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers. Further, Israeli army checkpoints, which remain positioned throughout the West Bank owing to continuous delays in the redeployment of the Israeli army in violation of the agreements reached, are often the scenes of physical and verbal harassment and violence against the Palestinian people.

The continuation of such Israeli policies and practices in violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, international humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and the agreements reached between the two sides within the context of the Middle East peace process serves as a further reason for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to address illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, the United Nations, through all its relevant organs, must strive to genuinely uphold its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 37 and 87, as well as of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations